#### **MINUTES**

# MONTANA SENATE 56th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

## COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Call to Order: By CHAIRMAN WILLIAM CRISMORE, on February 10, 1999 at 3:30 P.M., in Room 325 Capitol.

# ROLL CALL

#### Members Present:

Sen. William Crismore, Chairman (R)

Sen. Dale Mahlum, Vice Chairman (R)

Sen. Vicki Cocchiarella (D)

Sen. Mack Cole (R)

Sen. Lorents Grosfield (R)

Sen. Tom Keating (R)

Sen. Bea McCarthy (D)

Sen. Ken Miller (R)

Sen. Glenn Roush (D)

Sen. Mike Taylor (R)

Sen. Bill Wilson (D)

Members Excused: None.

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Larry Mitchell, Legislative Branch

Jyl Scheel, Committee Secretary

Please Note: These are summary minutes. Testimony and

discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

#### Committee Business Summary:

Hearing(s) & Date(s) Posted: SB 343, 2/21/1999; SB 344,

2/21/1999; SB 345, 2/21/1999

Executive Action: None

#### HEARING ON SB 343, SB 344, SB 345

Sponsor: SENATOR CHARLES "CHUCK" SWYSGOOD, SD 17, DILLON

SENATOR DEBBIE SHEA, SD 18, BUTTE

#### Proponents:

Bill Neal, Hanover Gold

Tim Babcock, Former Governor of the State of Montana Jill Andrews, Montana Mining Association Chris Gallus, Montana Chamber of Commerce John Forkan, Montana State Building & Construction Trades Council Evan Barrett, Executive Director, Butte Local Development Corp. George Holcomb, Cable Mountain Mine, Anaconda Ernest Nelson, Professional Engineer Tad Dale, President and Co-Owner, Majesty Mining, Inc. Jay Reardan, United Steel Workers of America, Local 72 Melissa Bogert, Butte Larry Johnson, Missoula Dick DeVoto, President, Canyon Resources Corporation Dirk Nelson, Professional Engineer, Montana Tunnels Mine Glenna Obie, Chairman of Jefferson County Commission and Secretary of Hard Rock Mining Counties Association Jerry Hanley, Hard Rock Miner from Lewistown Donna Sevalstad, Beaverhead and Madison County Commissioners Don Judge, Montana State AFL-CIO Mark Pfau, International Mineral Exploration Consultant Don Allen, Western Environmental Trade Association Randy Pinocci, self-employed Rody Holman, Economic Development Director for Butte-Silverbow Jerry Driscoll, Montana Building Construction Trades Council and President of Montana State AFL-CIO Tom Bourns, Consulting Geologist Jerry Harrington, Mine Manager, Golden Sunlight Mine Teresa Garland, Lincoln Jay Verde, Lincoln Connie Cole Joan Gabelman, Senior Geologist, Golden Sunlight Mine Eric Stimson, Independent Mineral Exploration Geologist, Helena Stephen Walsh, Vice-President of Human Resources of Montana Resources, Butte Jeff Levell, Chief Geologist, Montana Tunnels Mine Ted Antonioli, Geologist, Missoula Paul Fredericks, Mineral Exploration Consultant, Missoula Bill Jenkins, Vice President, Majesty Mine Dan McGrane, Consulting Geologist, Helena Craig Stiles, Consulting Geologist, Helena Bill Snoddy, McDonald Gold Project Delores Rife, Fergus County Clinton Cain, Fourth Generation Montana Miner, Gallatin County Frank Crowley, ASARCO Dennis R. Dugal, MINEX INC.

David Russell, President, Bush Drilling, Inc Steve Lloyd, Professional Engineer

#### Opponents:

Jim Jensen, Montanans for Common Sense Mining Laws for I-137  $\,$ 

Dan Teigen, Northern Plains Resource Council

Stephanie Shammel, Hilger

Dan and Lori Harrell, Hilger

Verner Bertelsen, Montana Senior Citizens Association

Mark Mackin, Helena

James Main, Sr., Ft. Belknap Indian Community Council

Kenneth Main, White Clay Society, Hayes

Jeff Barber, Montana Environmental Information Center

Mark Gerlach, Greenough

John Krutar, Blackfoot Legacy and himself

Mert Freyholtz, Sweet Grass Hills Protective Association and himself

Nils Troedsson, Dillon

Joe Gutkoski, President, Montana River Action Network

Mike Schestedt, Deputy County Attorney, Missoula, on behalf of the Missoula County Commissioners and Fred Van Valkenburg, Missoula County Attorney

Will Boland, Helena

Jim Emerson, Helena

Bryany Schwan, Program Director, Womens' Voices for the Earth Jerry Kustich, Montana State Trout Unlimited Council and Montana State Audubon Council

Craig Sweet, Legislative Director for MontBerg

Hope Stevens, Helena

Shawn Bassett, Missoula

Debbie Smith, Montana Common Cause

Steve Gilbert, Helena

Judy Smith, Helena

Stan Frasier, Helena

Sally Brown, Helena

Vicki Freyholtz, Gilford

Richard Wachs, Alberton

Marion Kroll, Great Falls

Ric Valois, Environmental Rangers, Sun River

Bill Davis, Helena

Tish Cockerham, Lincoln

Graden Oehlerich, Missoula

Richard Dill, Florence

Amy Boulanger, Belgrade

James Curtis, Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club, Missoula

Will Patric, Belgrade

Corrina Batten, Missoula Laura Scherubel, Missoula Cedar Brant Eric Rasmussen Chris Baldwin, Missoula Dore Gilels, Missoula Adam Nelson, Missoula Sam Robbins, Missoula Michael Sharp, Missoula Ashley Hinton Jeff Goin, Missoula Jane Madison, Missoula Douglas Rhodes, Whitefish Denise Roth Barber, Helena Lisa Fairman, Helena Shannon Heath, Helena Prudence Gildroy, Helena Paul Roos, Helena Dan Olson, Flathead Valley Chapter Trout Unlimited, Kalispell Bonnie Gestring, Helena Marlyn Atkins, East Helena Lisa Bay, Helena Ruth Burleigh, Chinook Matt Clifford, Missoula Andrea Davis, Missoula Mac Donofrio, Missoula Scott Edgerton, Missoula Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Larry Evans Jennifer Ferenstein, Missoula Taylor Hartman, Missoula Nate Heffter, Missoula John Hirsch, Missoula Jennifer Holmes, Missoula Patrick Leonard, Corvallis Kris Love, Missoula Shellan Miller, Missoula Toddy Perryman, Corvallis Jennifer Presnell, Missoula Wade Sikorski, Willard Megan Schneeberger, Missoula John Smart, Helena Justin Spratling, Missoula Hildie Young, Ennis Gordon Bennett, Helena Steve Gilbert, Helena

#### Opening Statement by Sponsor:

SENATOR CHARLES "CHUCK" SWYSGOOD, SD 17, DILLON, brought before the committee SB 343 and SB 344. SB 344 repeals the initiative passed in the November election for two years. SB 343 then resubmits to the voters of the State of Montana the same question that was voted on in November, 1998. One is a repealer for two years and the other puts it back on the ballot. In the interest of letting the public testify, he reserved his remaining remarks until closing.

SENATOR DEBBIE SHEA, SD 18, BUTTE, brought before the committee SB 345. This bill will allow a citizens initiative to remain in place yet it will permit any of the 56 counties in our state to determine their economic destiny through a county ordinance which is enacted by local government or a citizens initiative. appreciates the concerns of the opponents of this bill. She does not want to enact legislation that is harmful to the citizens of Montana. She did this for communities that would become economically devastated if they did not have these wage earners spending their income and if they did not receive the taxes it garners from the operation of the mine. Relative to the use of cyanide, laws are in existence to prevent the problems that the opponents fear. These laws need to be enforced vigorously to alleviate these problems but drastic measures as presented by CI-137 should not be forced on communities which depend on the mining industry. Mining has always played a major factor in the economy of Montana. The coffers of the state have for a century been enriched by the wealth of the mining industry. 38 of 56 counties or 76% voted against CI-137. The opponents of the bill and anyone here to protect the environment know that they don't have a corner on the market for environmental concerns.

## Proponents' Testimony:

Tim Babcock, Former Governor of the State of Montana representing himself, stated we should not have to be here today talking about this issue and spending time righting a wrong brought about because special interest groups have used the initiative process to subvert the legislative system that has served us so well throughout history of the government in Montana. In 1995 the buzz word was arsenic to scare the Montana public into believing things that were not true and now it is cyanide. Truthful information was not disseminated by the environmental community. Simply by repeating one word over and over, cyanide found its mark on enough voters to approve their ulterior motive of closing down the mining industry in Montana.

Initiatives do not bear the full scrutiny of the legislative process and therefore cannot possibly inform the public as well. It is regretful that a few overzealous extremists have given the environmental movement a bad name instead of working with the industries to make sure safe practices continue to be the focus of the resource industry for the future.

He is asking that the vote on I-137 be taken back to the people of Montana. One can look at our flag and see the heritage of the mining industry in Montana. The pick, shovel and plow represents mining and farming. The ribbon containing the states Oro-Y-Plata, gold and silver, waves proudly from the flag. Mining has played a significant role in Montana's heritage and with the good common sense of Montana's leaders, mining will continue and can be a significant role in the future.

Russ Ritter, Montana Resources, Butte, based his comments on the Economic Profile and Impact of Montana Resources - 1986-1998 as per EXHIBIT (nas33a01). He feels they have been a good citizen in the State of Montana and that all mines are good citizens. He is here today to defend the mining industry against the unreasonable types of activities described earlier.

Jill Andrews, Montana Mining Association spoke in support of SB 343, SB 344 and SB 345. Her comments are contained in the information presented in **EXHIBIT** (nas33a02).

Chris Gallus, Montana Chamber of Commerce, spoke generally in support of all three bills. He appreciated the opportunity to speak on this issue today. During the election they were not able to speak against these issues while the opponents could. Initiative 137 is an example of what occurs from a one-sided debate on a complex, environmental issue. This election was affected by I-125 because businesses were unconstitutionally restricted from speaking on this issue and their advocates were muzzled unconstitutionally as well. He feels the bills should be passed to restore integrity to the entire system.

John Forkan, Montana State Building & Construction Trades
Council, stated he is a native Montanan and has raised his family
here. He is very concerned about the environment. He does not
want mining companies coming into our state and destroying it but
we have laws in place to protect our pristine state. If jobs
keep being eliminated, our state will only be good for tourists
to come and enjoy. We need to keep an economic base and retain
the natural resources that we have been so blessed with. Our
college in Butte turns out some of the finest engineers in the
nation. It does not make sense to have to send them out of state
to find job. He is speaking primarily to SB 345 which would keep

the state law in place but would allow local option to allow voters decide if they want to utilize cyanide leach mining in their areas. He encourages a DO PASS recommendation.

Evan Barrett, Executive Director, Butte Local Development Corporation, stated Butte has been fighting some of the economic issues that Montana is now fighting across the state for the past 30 years. These bills are not really about if cyanide usage is right or wrong. These bills are about the process by which the people of this state determine whether it is an appropriate policy or not. In his opinion, I-137 was flawed scientifically and was built more for demagoguery than for good public policy. People have differing opinions and government processes are the way in which we resolve those differing opinions. democracy. These bills all deserve to be passed. SB 344 are about fairness in democratic decision making. gives some opportunity for economic decision making by local areas particularly local areas that are hurt. It gives the option of choice for decision making on this issue without changing one single word of Montana's strong environmental laws which are still musted here for any permitted mine.

{Tape : 1; Side : A; Approx. Time Counter : 0 - 44; Comments : None.}

George Holcomb, Cable Mountain Mine, Anaconda, spoke in support of the bills. He presented testimony based on his notes from the Mine Design, Operations & Closure Conference 1995. The notes were from Mr. Glenn Miller, PhD, Professor at the Dept. of Environmental and Resource Science University of Nevada-Reno and a Sierra Club Affiliate. EXHIBIT (nas33a03)

Ernest Nelson, Professional Engineer spoke in support of the bills as per his written testimony EXHIBIT (nas33a04).

Tad Dale, President and Co-Owner, Majesty Mining, Inc., stated it has been a dream of his since childhood to own and operate a gold mine. Majesty Mining operates a cyanide heap leach gold mine in Madison County. I-137 is not just something that will hurt them today and tomorrow, but will hurt them for a long time down the road. The use of new technology, or a new use for an old tool, namely cyanide, affords them the opportunity to enter into old mining districts. Cyanide has been used in the mining industry for well over 100 years. Its use for recovery of gold and silver from low grade ores became possible only due to the economics of mining larger volumes and using the system of leaching layers of ore placed on a prepared base. In Majesty Mining's case, they are only in business because of cyanide. There is no other substitute. I-137 took away their future opportunity to recover

their asset, therefore it took away their property without due process of law. I-137 was not really about cyanide, it was about wounding our state's mining industry and it worked. The eroding of this basic industry will take its toll on all Montanans. He spoke in support of all three bills.

Jay Reardan, United Steel Workers of America, Local 72, spoke in support of SB 345 which they feel is a legitimate extension of the initiative process to local voters most directly impacted by the effects of I-137.

Melissa Bogert, Butte, spoke in support of these bills as per written testimony EXHIBIT (nas33a05).

Larry Johnson, Missoula, is a minerals resource geologist. Montanans deserve an opportunity to revisit I-137 when they have heard all the facts from both sides of the issue. The initiative process only works when the electorate has a balanced and informed understanding of the issues when they go to the poles. This legislature now has the opportunity to show the people that they understand the initiative process is not perfect and they are willing to take a stand that may be unpopular but is the right way to go.

Dick DeVoto, President, Canyon Resources Corporation, owner of the McDonald Gold Project and the Seven-Up Pete Joint Venture spoke in support of the bills as per written testimony EXHIBIT (nas33a06).

Dirk Nelson, Professional Engineer, Montana Tunnels Mine, spoke
in support of these bills as per written testimony
EXHIBIT(nas33a07).

Glenna Obie, Chairman of Jefferson County Commission and Secretary of Hard Rock Mining Counties Association, spoke in support of the bills. The figures from election night in Jefferson County against I-137 were 29.05% For, 69.32% Against. The cities were large enough to determine the future of mining, the future of Jefferson County's economy and the future of many of their families. Jefferson County is the home of two hard rock mining operations - Golden Sunlight and Montana Tunnels. Jefferson County understands the impacts and value of mining operations. They are not crazy about a local option but it is better than the alternative.

Jerry Hanley, Hard Rock Miner from Lewistown, has been a miner for 27 years with 19 of those years spent using cyanide. Fergus County was the pioneer in the USA for the use of cyanide. In 1893 the Gilt Edge Mine started the first commercial cyanide

plant in America. In the millions of pounds of cyanide that have been used around Lewistown, no one has ever been hurt nor has there been any serious environmental damage. I-137 had nothing to do with cyanide, it was a sham. He stands in support of these three bills.

Donna Sevalstad, Beaverhead and Madison County Commissioners, spoke in support of the bills. EXHIBIT (nas33a08) In Beaverhead County they have added \$7 million in new construction year per year to the county rolls and yet their taxable value continues to decline. They need the ability to use every tool available to them as they fight for their economic survival.

Don Judge, Montana State AFL-CIO, spoke in support of the bills. He submitted two resolutions to the committee per **EXHIBIT (nas33a09)**. They also opposed I-137 while it was on the ballot and adopted a unanimous resolution through their convention to that effect.

{Tape : 1; Side : B; Approx. Time Counter : 0 - 41}

Mark Pfau, International Mineral Exploration Consultant, spoke in support of the bills and submitted written testimony EXHIBIT(nas33a10).

Don Allen, Western Environmental Trade Association, spoke in support of the bills. If a particular type industry or activity were to be stopped, would it not be the right sequence to pass first a bill that said no one could defend themselves and then come forward the next year with the other one.

Randy Pinocci, self-employed, stated the mining industry is responsible for a good part of his business in the printing industry. He did consult with the Mining Association about educating people about cyanide when the issue came up because it is not as dangerous as some people perceive. Because of I-125 he was not able to do that and feels that had a great effect on the outcome of the election.

Rody Holman, Economic Development Director for Butte-Silverbow, spoke in support of the bills.

Jerry Driscoll, Montana Building Construction Trades Council and President of Montana State AFL-CIO, spoke in support of all three bills and they support industry that pays a living wage.

Tom Bourns, Consulting Geologist, spoke in support of the three bills and submitted written testimony **EXHIBIT** (nas33a11).

Jerry Harrington, Mine Manager, Golden Sunlight Mine, spoke in support of the three bills and submitted written testimony EXHIBIT (nas33a12).

Teresa Garland, Lincoln, stated her family has owned a business in Lincoln 44 years. She spoke in support of the bills.

Jay Verde, Lincoln, spoke in support of SB 345.

Connie Cole spoke in support the three bills.

Joan Gabelman, Senior Geologist, Golden Sunlight Mine, spoke in support of the bills as per written testimony **EXHIBIT** (nas33a13).

Eric Stimson, Independent Mineral Exploration Geologist, Helena, urged support of all three bills and submitted written testimony EXHIBIT (nas33a14).

Stephen Walsh, Vice-President of Human Resources of Montana Resources, Butte, spoke in support of SB 343, SB 344 and in particular SB 345. He submitted written testimony EXHIBIT (nas33a15).

Jeff Levell, Chief Geologist, Montana Tunnels Mine, stated we do more to harm the water quality in this state by doing a load of laundry. The environmental concern is a little lopsided in this state. He submitted written testimony EXHIBIT (nas33a16).

Ted Antonioli, Geologist, Missoula, spoke in support of the three bills. He submitted written testimony **EXHIBIT** (nas33a17).

Paul Fredericks, Mineral Exploration Consultant, Missoula,
supported all three bills and submitted written testimony
EXHIBIT(nas33a18).

Bruce Cox, Co-owner Montana Clino-Z, lc, is operating a small industrial minerals mine in Beaverhead County and supports all three bills. He submitted written testimony EXHIBIT (nas33a19).

**Bill Jenkins, Vice President, Majesty Mine,** thanked the sponsors of the bills. He is a fourth generation Montanan and would like to stay here.

Dan McGrane, Consulting Geologist, Helena, spoke in support of the three bills and submitted written testimony **EXHIBIT** (nas33a20).

Craig Stiles, Consulting Geologist, Helena, spoke in support of the three bills and submitted written testimony **EXHIBIT** (nas33a21).

**Bill Snoddy, McDonald Gold Project,** supported all three bills. He thanked the sponsors for having the courage to stand up and support Montana families and Montana jobs. **EXHIBIT (nas33a22)**.

Mike Collins, Independent Montana Miners, asked the committee to support all three bills.

Delores Rife, Fergus County, spoke in support of all three bills.

Clinton Cain, Fourth Generation Montana Miner, Gallatin County, spoke in support of the bills and submitted written testimony EXHIBIT (nas33a23).

Frank Crowley, ASARCO, spoke in support of the three bills.

**Dennis R. Dugal, MINEX INC.**, submitted written testimony in support of the bills per **EXHIBIT (nas33a24)**.

**Bill Neal, Hanover Gold,** submitted written testimony in support of the bills per **EXHIBIT (nas33a25)**.

David Russell, President, Bush Drilling, Inc. submitted written testimony in support of the bills per EXHIBIT (nas33a26).

**Steve Lloyd, Professional Engineer,** submitted written testimony in support of the bills per **EXHIBIT (nas33a27)**.

# Opponents' Testimony:

Jim Jensen, Montanans for Common Sense Mining Laws for I-137, stated I-137 is sound public policy and it was passed on the basis of a thorough, vigorous and open debate which was not encumbered in the way it has been characterized. I-137's basis is quite clear. This one narrow method of mining has a record as a failed technology and Montanans have spoken they do not wish to have this technology in their future. I-137 does not apply to any of the mines you have heard about here today except Yellowband and Seven Up Pete Joint Venture - The McDonald Gold Project. All others that have existing operating permits are grandfathered. This issue is only about open-pit gold and silver mines which use cyanide heap or vat leaching. Golden Sunlight Mine at Whitehall is not affected by I-137. The election was fair. The remainder of this testimony is information handed out to the committee based on the EXHIBIT (nas33a28).

Dan Teigen, Northern Plains Resource Council, spoke in opposition to the three bills. He submitted written testimony as per

**EXHIBIT (nas33a29)**. He then read the following letters for families at Hilger who were not able to attend today due to bad weather.

Stephanie Shammel, Hilger EXHIBIT (nas33a30)
Dan and Lori Harrell, Hilger EXHIBIT (nas33a31)

**Verner Bertelsen, Montana Senior Citizens Association,** spoke in opposition to the three bills as per written testimony **EXHIBIT (nas33a32)**.

Mark Mackin, Helena, spoke in opposition to the three bills as per
written testimony EXHIBIT (nas33a33).

James Main, Sr., Ft. Belknap Indian Community Council, spoke in opposition to the three bills as per written testimony EXHIBIT (nas33a34).

Kenneth Main, White Clay Society, Hayes, lives close to the Landusky Mine and spoke in opposition to the bills. They live right below the mine in Blaine County but the mine is in Phillips County. At one time their people took a vote to decide on whether or not to mine on the reservation side. It was a reservation referendum vote and it was decided overwhelmingly not to mine on their side of the mountains. They still have to live next to this. He appreciates MEIC and the work they do and considers them warriors watching over the earth.

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Jeff Barber, Montana Environmental Information Center, stated they were in firm opposition to the three bills. He referred to a letter by Dr. Glenn Miller, Consulting Environmental Chemist in Reno, NV, for the remainder of his testimony. **EXHIBIT (nas33a35)**.

**Jeff Barber, representing himself,** stated he had been called a number of things here today by the proponents of the bills from an overzealous extremist to obstructionist. Most of all he is a concerned citizen who voted I-137. He would like the bills tabled because he wants his vote to count.

Mark Gerlach, Greenough, is a foreman of a 5th generation ranch 40 miles up the Blackfoot in SEN. McCARTHY'S district. These bills were passed by a majority in the last election as were the legislators elected by a majority of the electorate in their district. These bills seem to say that the Montana voters are too stupid to know what was voted for. He takes his vote very seriously. The mining industries say they have the technology to control cyanide and be safe but they have leaked every time.

Mr. DeVoto says they will sue the state, the people of the state, if they cannot use cyanide in their process. He cannot use herbicides to control weeds by dumping it in at the headgates. Flood irrigation is the most effective way to kill the weeds. Does that give him the right to sue the people of the state?

John Krutar, Blackfoot Legacy and himself, spoke in opposition to the bills as per written testimony EXHIBIT (nas33a36). He requested SEN. SWYSGOOD table SB 343 and SB 344 and spend his time on other things during this session. He feels the people have spoken. He respects SEN. SHEA for returning government to the people. Turning this vote back to the counties is fraught with serious problems. Rivers and airsheds do not coincide very nicely with counties. Let's not pit county against county, the people have spoken.

Mert Freyholtz, Sweet Grass Hills Protective Association and himself, stated as he drove here today on icy roads risking his life and the life of his family, he asked why was he doing that to come to something that was already a done deal. He suggested these bills should be thrown in the garbage. The vote was won fair and square. Less than 1/10 of 1% of the people in Montana make their living working at a heap leach cyanide gold mine. For this small percentage of jobs why are we risking our pristine Montana environment.

Nils Troedsson, Dillon, spoke in opposition to the bills as per his written testimony **EXHIBIT** (nas33a37).

Joe Gutkoski, President, Montana River Action Network, a statewide river watch dog group, spoke in opposition to the bills as per written testimony EXHIBIT (nas33a38).

Mike Schestedt, Deputy County Attorney, Missoula, on behalf of the Missoula County Commissioners and Fred Van Valkenburg, Missoula County Attorney spoke in opposition to the bills and in particular to SB 345 as per written testimony EXHIBIT (nas33a39) and EXHIBIT (nas33a40).

Will Boland, Helena, spoke in opposition to the bills as per his written testimony EXHIBIT (nas33a41).

Jim Emerson, Helena, spoke in opposition to the bills. He voted for I-137 because gold in the ground is money in the bank. When we have the technology to extract it without destroying the landscape we will indeed have something. The cyanide heap leach process for gold mining destroys 98 million pounds of rock for every pound of gold it extracts. Since 1962 there have been at least 60 spills of the deadly poison, cyanide, totaling over 100 million gallons

released into the Montana environment. Fifteen years after a spill at Golden Sunlight Mine the groundwater remains contaminated. He does not see the need to have the landscape destroyed and water polluted for the few people to have high paying jobs when he makes under \$15,000 per year. Mining companies go bankrupt leaving the taxpayers holding the bag and their employees forgotten and looking for work.

Bryany Schwan, Program Director, Womens' Voices for the Earth, spoke on her own behalf today. The Montana people have spoken, they have exercised their democratic right. The issue being faced today is whether to turn over their vote. The proponents say I-125 prevented them from having a fair argument. Every miner, anyone who works in the mining industry, and suppliers had just as much right to organize and just as equal a voice as anyone else. This was a fair election.

Jerry Kustich, Montana State Trout Unlimited Council and Montana State Audubon Council, spoke in opposition of the bills as per written testimony EXHIBIT (nas33a42).

Craig Sweet, Legislative Director for MontBerg, stated this was the second time he has had to defend the initiative process and should not have to do it.

Hope Stevens, Helena, spoke in opposition to the bills as per
written testimony EXHIBIT (nas33a43).

{Tape : 2; Side : B; Approx. Time Counter : 0 - 41}

**Shawn Bassett, Missoula,** submitted approximately 600 written statements in card form from Montana citizens who are against all three bills or any changes to I-137. **EXHIBIT (nas33a44)**.

Debbie Smith, Montana Common Cause, takes no position on I-137 but they strongly oppose any efforts to repeal or substantially change recently passed voter initiatives. In addition to having a republic where we vote to bring the legislators here, the voters maintain the right of a democracy. They voted on these measures, the measures passed and they should stand.

**Steve Gilbert, Helena,** submitted written testimony in opposition to the bills. **EXHIBIT (nas33a45)**.

Judy Smith, Helena, stated that as someone who does a lot of neighborhood politics, she talked to her neighbors about I-137, and their discussions encompassed what this meant and what they would be voting for. There was no manipulation and ignorance when the majority of people in Missoula did support this initiative.

Stan Frasier, Helena, strongly opposes these bills. He supplied
written testimony. EXHIBIT(nas33a46).

Sally Brown, Helena, stated she did not need a gold chain around her neck. She needs to live in a state where her vote is taken seriously.

Vicki Freyholtz, Gilford, stated 52% of the Montana voters voted for I-137. Listen to the voice of the people. **EXHIBIT** (nas33a47).

Richard Wachs, Alberton, spoke in opposition to the bills and submitted written testimony. **EXHIBIT (nas33a48)**.

Marion Kroll, Great Falls, stated democracy deferred is democracy ignored, please do not ignore democracy.

Ric Valois, Environmental Rangers, Sun River, opposed to all three bills.

Bill Davis, Helena, spoke in opposition to the bills and submitted
written testimony. EXHIBIT(nas33a49).

Tish Cockerham, Lincoln, stated her opposition to these bills.

Graden Oehlerich, Missoula, stated her opposition to these bills.

Richard Dill, Florence, submitted written testimony in his absence
EXHIBIT(nas33a50).

Amy Boulanger, Belgrade, stated her opposition to these bills and submitted written testimony. **EXHIBIT (nas33a51)**.

James Curtis, Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club, Missoula, stated his opposition to these bills and submitted written testimony. **EXHIBIT** (nas33a52).

Will Patric, Belgrade, stated his opposition to these bills and submitted written testimony. **EXHIBIT (nas33a53)**.

Corrina Batten, Missoula, stated her opposition to these bills and
submitted written testimony. EXHIBIT (nas33a54).

Laura Scherubel, Missoula, stated her opposition to these bills and submitted written testimony. **EXHIBIT (nas33a55)**.

Cedar Brant, Missoula, stated her opposition to these bills and submitted written testimony. **EXHIBIT (nas33a56)**.

**Eric Rasmussen**, Montana resident, human being of which we are all made up of 80% water. Healthy water is healthy humans. The healthy humans voted.

Chris Baldwin, Missoula, stated his name as Initiative Process and he is an endangered species in Montana. He submitted written testimony. **EXHIBIT (nas33a57)**.

Dore Gilels, Missoula, spoke in opposition to the bills and submitted written testimony. **EXHIBIT (nas33a58)**.

Adam Nelson, Missoula, spoke in opposition to the bills and submitted written testimony. **EXHIBIT (nas33a59)**.

Sam Robbins, Missoula, spoke in opposition to the bills and submitted her written testimony. **EXHIBIT**(nas33a60).

**Michael Sharp, Missoula,** is a student at U of M in geology program. Feels he made an educated decision last November and would appreciate his vote being upheld on I-137.

Ashley Hinton, speaking for herself as well as her unborn child. She is living proof of chemical spillage and would like to have the vote withheld so it does not happen to her future children.

**Jeff Goin, Missoula,** gave greetings to **SEN. MAHLUM AND COCCHIARELLA** from their constituency in Missoula. He spoke in opposition to the three bills.

Jane Madison, Missoula, spoke in opposition to the bills and submitted written testimony. **EXHIBIT (nas33a61)**.

Douglas Rhodes, Whitefish, spoke in opposition to the bills and submitted written testimony. **EXHIBIT (nas33a62)**.

Denise Roth Barber, Helena, stated her opposition to all three bills.

Lisa Fairman, Helena, stated her opposition to all three bills.

Shannon Heath, Helena, stated her opposition to all three bills.

**Prudence Gildroy, Helena**, hardworking Montanan and concerned voter supporting jobs that do not destroy stated her opposition to this legislation. **EXHIBIT (nas33a63)**.

Paul Roos, Helena, requested the committee table all three bills.

Dan Olson, Flathead Valley Chapter Trout Unlimited, Kalispell, stated their opposition to all three bills.

Bonnie Gestring, Helena, stated her opposition to all three bills.

Marlyn Atkins, East Helena, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a64).

Lisa Bay, Helena, submitted written testimony. EXHIBIT (nas33a65).

Ruth Burleigh, Chinook, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a66).

Matt Clifford, Missoula, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a67).

Andrea Davis, Missoula, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a68).

Mac Donofrio, Missoula, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a69).

Scott Edgerton, Missoula, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a70).

Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a71).

Larry Evans, submitted written testimony. EXHIBIT (nas33a72).

Jennifer Ferenstein, Missoula, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a73).

Taylor Hartman, Missoula, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a74).

Nate Heffter, Missoula, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a75).
John Hirsch, Missoula, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a76).

Jennifer Holmes, Missoula, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a77).

Patrick R. Leonard, Corvallis, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a78).

Kris Love, Missoula, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a79).

Shellan Miller, Missoula, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a80).

Toddy Perryman, Corvallis, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a81).

Jennifer Presnell, Missoula, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a82).

Wade Sikorski, Willard, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a83).

Megan Schneeberger, Missoula, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a84).

John Smart, Helena, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a85).

Justin Spratling, Missoula, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a86).

Bob Stevens, Helena, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a87).

Hildie Young, Ennis, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT (nas33a88).

Gordon Bennett, Helena, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a89).

Steve Gilbert, Helena, submitted written testimony.
EXHIBIT(nas33a90).

#### <u>Informational Testimony</u>:

Courtney Young, Assistant Professor of Metalurgy, Montana Tech, submitted facts about cyanide and the process by which gold is made. **EXHIBIT** (nas33a91).

Robin McCulloch, Montana Bureau of Mines, Mining Engineer, submitted informational testimony as per EXHIBIT (nas33a92).

{Tape : 3; Side : A; Approx. Time Counter : 0 - 16; Comments : None.}

# Questions from Committee Members and Responses:

**SENATOR McCARTHY** stated she had the paper entitled "Ten Reasons to Support I-137". She asked that documentation be supplied for the committee in reference to #5. **Jim Jensen** stated the documentation is in the packet provided from **DEQ** files. He would meet with her after the hearing to find out exactly what she wanted.

SENATOR ROUSH questioned if the Montana mining people would be willing to bring back an initiative in the next General Election to let the people of Montana revote this issue? Mr. DeVoto stated he could not speak for the entire mining community. SEN. ROUSH asked if his mine would be interested in bringing back another initiative? Mr. DeVoto responded with I-137 in place it makes it very difficult on mining projects in this state. questioned in his written testimony where it said there was a possibility that Canyon Resources would evaluate the merits of filing a takings lawsuit against the State of Montana for the loss of potential revenue as an effect of I-137. Mr. DeVoto said they had no contemplation of such action prior to the vote. Once I-137 had passed they sought legal counsel to ask what recourse there was for the \$70 million they had invested over ten years based on prior law in the state which allowed such operations. counsel gave them very strong indications that a lawsuit of that type would have merit given the facts. They would prefer to have the mine but if there was no other recourse, that would be the path they would be forced to follow to protect their shareholders.

SENATOR TAYLOR asked if he was familiar with the Cripple Creek Is that mine one that was walked away from leaving the taxpayers of Colorado with a cleanup? Mr. DeVoto said he thought there may be some mistaken identification. There is a new cyanide heap leach open pit mining operation at Cripple Creek called the Crescent Mine. That mine has recently been permitted and operating for three years very successfully. Summitville is probably the one He believes Galactic Resources is the company in question. involved with that mine. SEN. TAYLOR questioned what happened Mr. DeVoto stated this was previously a historic copper, gold, mineralized system that underground miners worked for 100 years and left a honeycomb of underground openings in the hill before the turn of the century. The open pit gold mine of 1990 mined some of the top of that mountain. The company that operated that mine could not sustain it. The impact on the environment was principally acid mine drainage with rainwater and snow melt flowing into the old underground honeycomb of openings. This flowed into the creeks which were named Poison Creek, Allum Creek, and Iron Creek. The natives in the area had named the creeks for bitterness and acidity prior to the mining activities. That mining operation has been subsequently reclaimed and since then the Crescent Mine

has now been opened successfully with modern mining practices and is operating safely. **SEN. TAYLOR** said he believed it cost the taxpayers \$138 million for the cleanup. He then questioned if Canyon Resources had their corporate headquarters or bank accounts in Montana? **Dick DeVoto** stated Canyon Resources is headquartered in Golden, Colorado.

SENATOR WILSON questioned if the \$600 million lawsuit Mr. DeVoto had referred to in his testimony was a possibility or was it just a scare tactic? Harley Harris, Assistant Attorney General, stated SENATOR COCCHIARELLA had requested that someone from their office be in attendance to field questions today. He could not actually answer the question as it would be just an opinion without documentation for a legal basis for his claim and would not be prudent for him to do so. He would try to outline some of the issues that any lawsuit of this type would entail. Any plaintiff in a takings suit must overcome: 1) is there a property right per Canyon Resources holds a lease from the state for McDonald Gold Project. The lease states all mining activities would be pursuant to all applicable state and federal law. Would I-137 be an applicable law? Is there a property right to mine with cyanide heap leach process? 2) Would there be economic harm? 3) If you assume there is a property right and the law denies the plaintiff of all economic viable use of the property, goes then to a third law which falls within background principals of state property and nuisance law. Even if it denies the plaintiff all economic viable use of their property, it still can be upheld as noncompensible.

**SENATOR WILSON** questioned if it would be his intention to go on record today about being serious about bringing this kind of action against the state? **Dick DeVoto** stated if there was no other recourse, they would file such suit.

SENATOR KEATING felt he should respond to the statements, made by the opposition, that the people had voted and we should not overturn the will of the people. There are two forms of government, pure democracy in which all of the people vote on all of the issues all of the time, and representative republic. In the federalist papers we are warned not to have a democracy because the people do not properly inform themselves and they can often be stampeded into bad decisions by vocal minorities. Therefore, Benjamin Franklin said to the group, "we have given you a republic if you can hold it." This meant we have two systems now in our Constitution: 1) we are a representative republic in that we, the legislators, are elected by the people to represent them in the legislature in community. 2) They also have the right to the initiative in which they can vote.

We are here because the people have elected us. He openly campaigned against the water quality initiative two years ago. People told him he had to vote for this because there were toxins in the water. He replied there are toxins in our breakfast cereal. He campaigned openly and was re-elected. He took a count of the vote in his district and I-137 got 5,000 votes. He received over 6,000 votes. He feels the people elected him to vote in their best interest through an informed decision and that is what he intends to do.

SENATOR McCARTHY asked if the County Commissioner vote is ultimate or do the people in the community still have something to say? SENATOR SHEA stated Mr. Krutar had been incorrect in his assumption that the two County Commissioners would have the final determination. It always goes ultimately to the people by way of the initiative process. She wanted it clear in writing her bill that the people had the ultimate vote. Larry Mitchell said one of the reiterations of SB 345 required this vote to go to the people only. The latest iteration says, "the people of a county by initiative process or the Board of County Commissioners by resolution may adopt an ordinance." At this point in time, it can be adopted by a Board of County Commissioners, however, in the ordinance process every ordinance adoption is subject to an initiative process for repeal.

SENATOR GROSFIELD asked if the cyanide solution was typically 50 - 250 parts per million? Courtney Young stated that was close enough. SEN. GROSFIELD said if it was 235 million gallons of weak solution we would be talking between 12,000 to 47,000 gallons of actual cyanide, does that sound right? Courtney Young stated the 250 would be like an average maximum and the 50 would be like an average minimum. SEN. GROSFIELD asked if the Bureau of Mines had any verification on this number (235 million gallons) that is being suggested? Is that a reasonable number of leakage? Robin McCulloch stated the documentation would have to come through Environmental Management Bureau of DEQ. His office does not keep track of the amount of spill but DEQ does.

SENATOR GROSFIELD questioned if his operation used cyanide and what is it like to handle cyanide? Tad Dale said they have respect for cyanide. It is stored on a lined area. They use proper hood and gloves when mixing it. The key to using cyanide is to always have the PH of your water around 11 with 7 being neutral. When cyanide is added there is no chemical reaction because it is not fumed off. If the PH is kept up, there is nothing to worry about. Daily they have their hands in it and it does not burn their skin. They use about 200 parts per million in their mix. It is very easily killed with bleach or hydrogen peroxide. There have been no accidental deaths from cyanide. It is very safe.

SENATOR GROSFIELD questioned if I-137 would affect Golden Sunlight Mr. Harrington stated I-137 will affect Golden Sunlight and referred to page 2 of his written testimony. Specifically, Golden Sunlight currently has a 61/2 year mine plan. There is about a million ounces in reserves in that mine plan. They also have proven resources that exceed that number of ounces in reserves that are noneconomic that, as recently as three years ago, were in their reserve and mine plan. If the gold price recovers to where they could put those reserves back into resource they would have double the ounces under reserves that could not be permitted under I-137. That is an extreme impact on Golden Sunlight. The same person that said Golden Sunlight is not affected, sued to have Golden Sunlight's permit rescinded in September, just a few months after receiving it. Specific language in the suit brought by Jim Jensen and others, to have the permit rescinded, calls for a revocation of the permit, which under I-137 would be clearly impossible. If the law remains standing and they are successful in the lawsuit to get their permit modified and rescinded, they would be shut down immediately.

# {Tape : 3; Side : A; Approx. Time Counter : 16 - 41; Comments : None.}

SENATOR GROSFIELD asked if Mr. Jensen would like to respond to that comment. Mr. Jensen stated he would like the committee to read I-137. I-137 says "a mine which was 'operating' on election day may continue operating under its existing permit but the permit may not be amended to allow its operation to be expanded." If the mine was operating on that day, and Golden Sunlight was operating, they are grandfathered under I-137, whether or not the court revokes their permit of initio or not. They get to go back and get their permit again. I-137 does not apply to them if they were operating under that permit. SEN. GROSFIELD stated that was correct, it says if they were operating on election day they can continue operating. The next words say "under its existing permit but the permit may not be amended to allow its operations to be expanded." Only so long as they keep the existing permit that was in effect on November 3, 1998, can they keep operating, is that not what that Mr. Jensen stated the reading of this act is if they are operating and the intent of the act, which he has stated several times publically as author of the act, is that they are grandfathered and that if they are operating then I-137 does not apply to them. SEN. GROSFIELD asked if he would support amendments to exclude Golden Sunlight from I-137? Mr. Jensen stated, absolutely. They had intended to exclude Golden Sunlight from I-137, under the terms of the existing permit and the current operating conditions. He addressed the lawsuit by stating Mr. Harrington was right that the permit, as granted, is deficient and the Court needs to fix the permit. The permit, as granted, does

not require reclamation of this mine. The pit goes absolutely unreclaimed, and allows for perpetual treatment of poisoned discharged water. That is the basis of their suit. If the Court fixes their permit, they should be able to operate. This is a mine that has been operating, the disturbance is done. They are trying to be forward looking with I-137 to phase this method out, over time, and not have new ones created in the future.

**SENATOR MAHLUM** questioned if this would put Yellowband out of business? **Mr. Jensen** stated **Mr. Nelson** said only cyanide heap leaching under the current price of gold will make his project viable. He has no reason to believe or disbelieve him. It is a small mine of less than 5 acres on French Creek out of Dillon. This is one of the two projects that would be affected.

SENATOR COLE referred to the information letters submitted on behalf of Northern Plains Resource Council and two other families that could not attend. He questioned what effect cyanide has actually had regarding the mining industry? Mr. Teigen stated in regard to the Schammel letter, he could not answer officially on their behalf. SEN. COLE stated Mr. Teigen was here on behalf of Northern Plains Resource Council and wondered if he was aware their lobbyist brought forth, in another hearing, that Northern Plains was happy about and taking responsibility for the poor economic condition the mining industry is now in? Dan Teigen stated their policy is to address the irresponsible aspects of the mining industry they feel are throughout Montana, not a blanket approach to any one industry, whether it be agriculture, mining or small business. SEN. COLE stated he was sure the mining industry would not go on record as being proud of the fact there are problems in the agricultural industry. He hoped they would take another look at their goals.

SENATOR GROSFIELD stated Mr. Mackin did not testify for or against I-137 but was more directed to the people have spoken and the vote should not be overturned for two years. He interpreted that to mean it would be OK to bring this up again in two years?

Mr. Mackin stated that was more or less correct although he did not throw the two years in as any kind of arbitrary figure. No statute should exist forever. In the law they all have to be up for a change at some point in time and should be amended as needs require. SEN. GROSFIELD stated he mentioned the legislature but not the Courts. Would it be his position the Courts should stay away for two years also? Mr. Mackin responded no.

**SENATOR COCCHIARELLA** said there had been a lot said today in a rather accusatory tone about representative government. Because she represents an area in Missoula that voted 2-1 for I-137, would it be responsible for her as a legislator to vote no on these

Mr. Nelson stated, on legal advice, he could not participate in the debates to speak as he would have liked to have He could not contribute money because he was a sole stockholder in the company that he had set up to operate his small mine. He could not speak effectively nor sufficiently to the issue in the 11 days he had after I-125 was overturned. It should be recognized that this was not a fair election. He asks that the committee corrects this so the playing field is level and the voters can truly say what they want to say and be an informed electorate. SEN. COCCHIARELLA stated she was uncomfortable about the comments made about them today. She did not think the man who said about being stupid and then electing them realized how that sounded to the committee. She represents a district in Missoula that voted 2-1 for I-137 but **SEN. SHEA** represents a district in Butte that voted 3-1 against I-137. Is it appropriate COCCHIARELLA to vote against this and SEN. SHEA to do what she is doing according to what you think is the will of the people? that the way this initiative process should work? Mr. Nelson said he felt there was a choice in front of them. They could pick SEN. SHEA'S choice which he feels really is the will of the people. The people of Beaverhead County, where his proposed mine is located, voted 68-70% in favor of using cyanide. SEN. SHEA'S district said yes they wanted cyanide too. Those people's voices should be He did not feel that someone, like himself, following existing regulations should not be able to make a living. Missoula does not want it then perhaps the solution is for Missoula not to have it. Why should Missoula County impact Beaverhead County or Deer Lodge County?

SENATOR COCCHIARELLA stated it was frustrating to try to be a representative of the people and watch the people's branch of government be eroded by whatever process that may be. She is voting for her people and other legislators here are also representing their constituents. She wanted that message loud and clear, whether it be her or SEN. SHEA or anyone else. That is their job.

SENATOR MAHLUM stated he had heard in the testimony that the initiative process should not be tampered with and the mining industry should improve themselves in one way or another? Mr. Bertelsen stated that was correct. SEN. MAHLUM asked if mining was closed down, how could they improve themselves? Mr. Bertelsen stated he did not think this bill necessarily closed down mining but it does restrict a certain type of mining.

**SENATOR CRISMORE** restated the disappointing event where the Northern Plains Resource Council lobbyist stated he would like to take the credit for putting the mining people in the position they are in today economically and the State but he could not take the

credit for it because he felt it was due to the price of gold. He stated that was a very disappointing comment for the legislators to hear when they are trying to do something to move the state on.

**SENATOR WILSON** stated he appreciated the remarks but stated an apology was made at the hearing and the individual stated he had spoken inappropriately. He felt the situation was rectified at that point and it was neither appropriate nor fair to continue on in this manner.

## Closing by Sponsor:

SENATOR SHEA closed by saying she thinks the State of Montana can ill afford to paralyze an industry that is as vital to our economic well being as blood is to life. The State of Montana cannot strangle the communities that depend on the mining industry for their economic development. The state cannot lose a revenue source and an important employable partner, as we have seen over the years from the mining industry. We and the mining industry must be cognizant and ever alert to problems that arise from industrial development. However, the State of Montana cannot become a pristine playground only for those who can afford our beauties at the expense of our working people. These workers also need income to enjoy our beautiful state.

Some asked, "Don't I get it?" She does get it. She is here today representing the constituents from her district who voted 76% against I-137 and the 38 counties who voted against this initiative. Montana needs an employable future as well as the State of Montana needs revenue sources to keep Montana the great state that it is. She is in hopes that her grandchildren will be in Montana at the turn of the next century because of decisions made here today at the end of this century.

**SENATOR CHARLES "CHUCK" SWYSGOOD** thanked the committee for a good hearing. Legislators have the right to represent the people of their districts and that is what they are doing. He has to beg to differ when someone tells him that he should not dare interfere with the vote of the people. His people did not vote for this.

He has been on the side of issues that were not receptive to the environmental community. It is not because he is a non-environmentalist. It is because he thinks we go much too far sometimes in trying to protect ourselves from ourselves. In doing that we come out with nothing.

He is not in the back pockets of the mines as was stated in the first letter he received. That is offensive. He is his own person and represents the people of his district. The people of his

district are hard working. Most are farmers and ranchers who are having their troubles. Some are miners, the best paying jobs they have in the community. How do you tell the people at Golden Sunlight that they do not want that job.

He believes I-137 affects Golden Sunlight because every operating mine in this state has to get a permit renewed in order to continue to operate. When they do that, they fall under this. What about the schools that are dependent on these taxes? What about those people who depend on this for their livelihood? What are we going to do with them? Because we brought an initiative to the people on the pretense that cyanide was an unproven theory. They have used this for 100 years with many deaths? None.

There are a lot of other things going on this state that wish they had that same record. If this is successful and stands, he would expect to see another initiative, from the people that brought this one, to outlaw every railroad train that runs through the State of Montana along the riverbed that carries a hazardous material. How ridiculous is that? Or how about taking every truck off the highway that has hazardous material which has more potential for causing of harm to the people than the mining of this product.

He has been around here a long time and maybe the person was right who said he was a poster child for terms limits. If he is, he is proud of it!

{Tape : 3; Side : B; Approx. Time Counter : 0 - 32.2; Comments : None.}

# **ADJOURNMENT**

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SEN. WILLIAM CRISMORE, Chairman

JYL SCHEEL, Secretary

WC/JS

EXHIBIT (nas33aad)